India-Japan Joint Declaration issued on 10 December 2001 during the visit of Prime Minister Vajpayee to Japan.

(b) India and Japan maintain that terrorism cannot be justified wherever, whenever and for whatever reason; they resolutely condemn terrorism in any form and believe that the fight against global terrorism has to be comprehensive and sustained, with the objective of total elimination of terrorism in all regions. It has been agreed that a dialogue on counter-terrorism will be held in the framework of the annual India-Japan Comprehensive Security Dialogue.

(c) There are 33 ongoing loan projects, 2 technical co-operation projects and 2 Green Aid Plan projects under implementation in India under collaboration with Government of Japan.

Steps by India to join G-8 Nations

1712. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken or proposed to take by Government to make India as one of the countries of the G-8 Nations;

(b) whether any diplomatic and political success achieved in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) There is no such proposal before the Government.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Pendency of applications at RPO, Ahmedabad

1713. DR. A.K. PATEL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Regional Passport Offices in Gujarat indicating their locations;

(b) the number of applications pending in these offices for issue of passports; and

(c) whether Government intend to open more passport offices to meet requirement of the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) The Regional Passport Office at Ahmedabad is presently the only Passport Office in the State of Gujarat.

(b) the number of applications pending at the Regional Passport Office, Ahmedabad as on 22.11.2002 is 36,183. An application is considered pending when the application is complete in all respects and a clear police verification report has been received.

(c) It has been decided to open a Passport Office at Surat. Staff for deployment at Passport Office, Surat, have also been earmarked. An accommodation, where the new Passport Office will be located, has now been identified with the help of State Government of Gujarat and the modalities for its leasing are being worked out.

Prime Minister's Maldives visit

1714. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MISS MABEL REBELLO:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the bilateral ties worked out in different fields for mutual interest during the recent visit of the Prime Minister to Maldives; and

(b) the agreements arrived at to boost co-operation in tourism between both the countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Prime Minister paid an official visit to the Maldives from September 22-25, 2002 at the invitation of His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Maldives. The visit reflected the importance that Government of India attaches to developing and reinforcing bilateral relations with Maldives, a close and friendly neighbour.

India-Maldives' collaboration in developmental projects is the cornerstone of our economic relations. Both the countries have been engaged in cooperation in human resource development, infrastructure projects, healthcare and information technology.

During his visit, Prime Minister announced gifting of equipment and vehicles for Maldives' project on Population and Consolidation Development Programme, that includes supply of material for construction